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THE
GRAPE GROWER'S GUIDE.

BY J. KEECH.

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THE
GRAPE GROWER'S GUIDE,
A.
PLAIN AND PRACTICAL WORK
UPON THE
MANAGEMENT OF THE GRAPE VINE.

✓
BY J. KEECH, WATERLOO, N. Y.



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THE GRAPE VINE.

ITS MANAGEMENT.

The want of a simple, plain and practical instructor in the management of the Grape Vine, is felt by almost every individual who wishes to set even a small number of vines.

There is existing an impression almost universal amongst inexperienced persons, in regard to the training and management of the vine, viz: that it is very difficult to understand, without a long and experimental knowledge of its culture. To this I would say, that a spark of light given at the proper time, will drive away all darkness upon this point. For certainly, there can be nothing more simple and easily understood, than the rearing of the vine, from its setting until the fruiting state arrives, and after this, a uniform treatment is required, with very little variation, if proper rules are adhered to in season.

In attempting to give my own views upon this subject, I

do not mean to convey the idea that there are not suitable and valuable works already before the public, upon this subject, for certainly there are many very good works. But my experience is, that as we are almost daily coming in possession of some improvement for the advancement of our earthly occupations, our desires have almost come to the conclusion that nothing but steam and lightning will suffice. Hence, short sermons, or brief descriptions, full of practical utility—something that the new beginner can procure for a small sum, and when wanted, to apply to practical use, can understand at a glance—a work of this description I propose to furnish; being based upon my own experience in the practical culture of the Grape and Vine for years.

SETTING OF THE VINE.

In the first place, I will commence with the setting of the vine, which is very simple and easily accomplished. About the only thing that would seem necessary in this operation, is to caution all against mixing barn-yard manure with the earth which is thrown upon the roots. In planting, put nothing but the plain, well pulverized earth. Plant in ground where water does not stand; almost any soil, if dry, will answer. Clay is best. In placing the vine in the

ground, leave two buds above the surface, and spread the roots in different directions, and get the extremities as deep as the roots will reach when they are cut to about twelve inches in length. The distance apart, eight feet in row; rows ten feet apart. The vine set, drive a stake, sharpened at the lower end, into the ground, within four or five inches of the vine, when the buds are started about two inches. If a one year vine, rub all off but one. No further attention is necessary, only to keep the ground well worked through the summer, and to tie the growing cane to the stake. If it is a healthy, good vine, it will make a cane six or eight feet high.

AUTUMN PRUNING.



Fig. 1.

At the end of the season, about three weeks after the foliage is off, cut the upright cane off about ten inches above the ground. Cover the short cane left with earth, before the ground freezes, thus left until spring. The line shown in cut No. 1, indicates the locality for cutting the cane off at the end of the season, being the first year's growth of a one-year-old vine before setting. Second year's growth, which will be the same as would be

produced by the first year of a good strong two-year-old vine, when set.

SECOND YEAR.

At the approach of the season when vegetation begins to start, remove the earth from over the vine, exposing it to the natural elements. At the time when the buds have attained a growth of about two inches, rub all off but two; the strongest buds leave for the arms. When long enough to reach the lower wire on the trellis, tie them to the wire, in the manner shown in cut No. 2.



Figure 2.

As these two canes grow, keep them confined to the horizontal wire, allowing them to make as much growth as they will, observing always to change the position of the canes at the junction, to prevent the canes from splitting apart when they are to be laid upon the ground for winter protection, at the end of the season. If the canes are ripe and sound to the length of one half the distance between the vines, which would be four feet each way, supposing the

vines to be set eight feet apart, cut both canes off at this length, also any laterals or side shoots, leaving two smooth canes for arms, as shown in cut No. 2. At the proper time, before the ground freezes, cut loose the canes from the wire, bend them gently to the ground, and either fasten them down with pegs of wood, or throw a sufficient amount of earth upon them, to hold them to the ground. This being done, they will remain safe until spring. When the weather is suitable, in the following spring, uncover, and tie the canes to the wire. This brings you to the third year.

THIRD YEAR—FIRST FRUITING SEASON.

At this stage, the vine will show signs of fruiting. However, but little should be kept to mature. At the proper season of the year, buds will shoot from the canes. This, observe, is the third year from setting, which will be the beginning of fruiting. The buds will start at distances varying from four to ten inches apart, owing to variety. In order to give sufficient circulation of air and light, it is best to leave the buds about twelve inches apart, the intermediates being rubbed off. These canes will generally show fruit blossoms; all should be taken off, except, perhaps one cluster to each cane. The vine will show a beautiful appearance, throwing

up its vertical canes towards the top of the trellis, showing the clusters of grapes at the base. When the upright canes reach the top wire, which will be about mid-summer, do not go to cutting and slashing, but assist the canes to direct their course upon the upper wire, in a horizontal direction; a very little tying will effect this object. The trellis will, at mid-summer, present a view as shown in cut No. 3. This

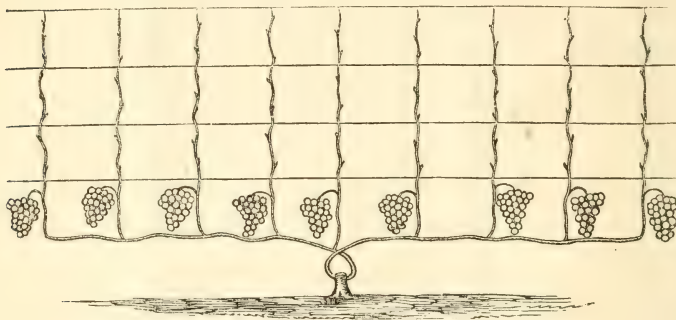


Figure 3.

is quite as much fruit as any vine should bear the first bearing year. The vine is established, and shows as much wood as ever should be left to grow at any time, for fruiting, if fine, large clusters of well ripened fruit is desired.

UNIFORM MODE OF PRUNING.

The yearly uniform mode of pruning now commences.

At the proper time of pruning, which can be done at any time before the weather becomes severe in autumn, leave the horizontal arms as they are. Here is the point at which most cultivators fail, it being essential to produce young wood for fruiting the ensuing year.

TO PRODUCE BEARING WOOD.

New wood cannot be obtained in the proper locality, unless a portion of the current year's wood is cut away, forming a stopping place for the sap, which, when stopped, forces the extreme bud upon the cut cane, to put forth and form the continuation of the severed cane. Hence the necessity of cutting, in order to renew young bearing wood.

For example: if all the upright canes in cut No. 3, were left to remain and bear fruit, the next year the vine would be entirely destitute of new wood for the next season's fruiting; except the bearing laterals, and in order to secure these, the entire trellis of upright canes would need to be left, which have become large and stiff, inconvenient to lay down, and being the cause of conveying the sap further from the root every year, making the very best part of the vine entirely barren, destitute of new wood.

But in order to remedy this objection, some modes are

given: by cutting every other cane at the first bud above the arm, alternately every year, leaving each year one half the upright canes to fruit and the other half to grow new canes for the next year's fruiting. This is a very good mode, if you will always take the fruit off the new cane, which if left on, very often robs it of sufficient nourishment to become a good strong cane.

MANNER OF PRODUCING EARLY FRUIT.

A better and much surer mode I would recommend, as never failing to produce a crop of grapes, and to ripen them several days earlier under the circumstances, and having assurance of the buds all shooting — one not having the advantage of the other in conveying sap.

When the vines are permanently established, as is shown in drawing No. three, instead of cutting every other cane at the first bud above the arm, I propose to cut all off, one bud above the arm, every year; and instead of allowing the upper bud to be extended for the next year's cutting, make the extension on the junction cane and cut the fruiting stub off, which will leave the horizontal arm without any old wood in the shape of spurs.

Every year leave the one bud on the junction cane

and cut the other which has fruited off close to the arm. The cross lines on the outer upright canes, in cut No. four,

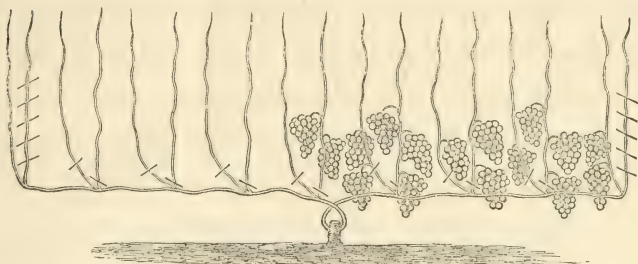


Figure 4.

show what is the result of cutting each year, upon the same cane. It is evident that each year, the young wood is carried up the space occupied between two buds, which at the end of five years, on a Concord vine, would be at least five feet high, of old hard wood, and not a bud below.

But by leaving the extension on the junction bud cane, you will keep the arm at all times supplied with new, strong wood, close down to the junction, and each year have the foliage of a strong cane extending to the top of the trellis. A goodly supply of healthy foliage must be had, in order to secure a crop of good grapes. This mode of training and pruning, will secure a crop of grapes every year, if the season is favorable, from any of the healthy, hardy and early

varieties. In adopting the foregoing mode of pruning, you do away with the necessity of summer pruning entirely. The fruit-bearing canes, in this mode, are entitled to the benefit of all the foliage that may be produced upon them, for without perfect leaves, grapes will not ripen.

All of the hardy varieties do not require to be covered with earth; Diana and Allen's Hybrid must be covered with earth in cold localities, as they are rather tender.

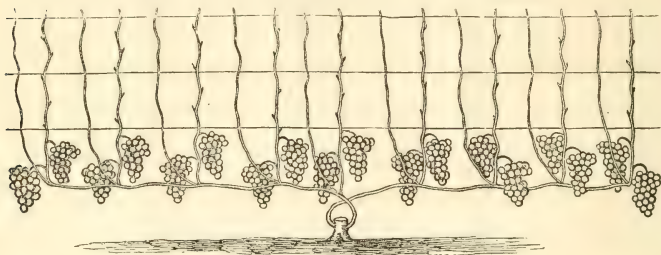


Figure 5.

Drawing No. five, represents the vine in full bearing, the fourth year after planting, according to my mode of training and pruning; the trellis being made of posts and number eleven wire; posts twenty-five feet apart. Four wires; first, twenty inches above ground; distance between wires, fourteen inches.

This cut shows the fruit only on the cane which was cut

one bud above the arm, the previous fall, leaving the junction cane to grow strong. Double this quantity can be left upon the vine, by allowing the junction cane to bear; but ten pounds well ripened grapes are much more valuable than twenty pounds half ripened.

I have given you the quantity under which a vine will thrive and ripen its fruit every favorable year, and from five to ten days earlier, than by the spur system upon the upright canes. I am well aware that some cultivators will think that there is not a sufficient amount of bearing wood left for fruiting, and I would here say, that more can be left if desired, by allowing all the buds to remain upon the horizontal arm, at the time of the first fruiting, as shown in cut number three. As the vines of many varieties will send forth buds frequently, at distances of not more than three inches apart, which upon an arm of four feet in length, would produce sixteen fruiting canes, two arms to a vine, you would have thirty-two upright bearing canes. Suppose you leave an average number of three clusters to the cane, you have here ninety-six clusters of grapes; calculate five clusters to the pound, and your product will be almost twenty pounds to the vine.

This amount is admitted by all good cultivators, to be too great a crop for the good of the vine; or to insure any degree of certainty in maturing the fruit; and all will agree, that there is but little profit or pleasure in having a vine heavily laden with fruit, unless they perfect their ripening, for green grapes are entirely worthless. Over bearing is one of the main causes of failure in grape culture. It not only prevents the ripening of the fruit, but also the young wood, for the next year's crop — both are left in an unripe condition — the result of which, is only calculated to discourage and dishearten the cultivator, and he comes to the conclusion that grape growing is an unprofitable business; whereas, if the rules mentioned in the foregoing description are adhered to, but little fears need be entertained of having a bountiful crop of first quality fruit; if the variety is a good one and the season reasonably favorable.

I would say here, that all nurserymen and vine dealers, of every description and locality, will find this work an admirable acquisition to their business, as thousands of customers might be secured, if this brief, simple, practical book of instructions were at hand, and offered at such a reduced price. Being embodied with every thing necessary for the

proper management of the vine, from the transplanting to the yearly pruning, when in fruiting condition. It being so perfectly plain and practical, that I am satisfied it will give universal satisfaction to all parties interested.

A liberal discount made to all Dealers, Nurserymen, Tree Agents, Book Sellers, &c., at wholesale

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